Dublin July 26. 1864

Dear Mr May — I enclose a letter I had yesterday from Dr Hancock, a man of great energy & usefulness which has been frequently employed by government as secretary of commissions of inquiry on Education, the management of public bodies, &c. He wishes for certain information by the 10th of Sept. Can you readily supply it in a short, compact form. Many particulars are not necessary. If the information be reliable Dr H. may easily rely on the public ignorance for the incontrovertibility of what you have to give him. It may be sent through me. H. held the professorship of Pol. Economy which is now held [for a term of 5 years] by Professor Cairnes.

You take ~~needless~~ great pains to assure me about the U.S. having enlisted British subjects. I am glad you think as you do & have no doubt you are right. I probably took some idea I had seen strongly asserted & supported by apparent facts in the newspapers.

In the matter of the prisoners from the Alabama I doubt the complicity of the owner of the yacht with Semmes. He denies it utterly & if he were not an accomplice, I don't see how he could have given up the men when he had rescued them. Would you have thought it the thing to do so? Certainly Winslow asks them

However under the present circumstances of your country a Northern man naturally seems to see every thing done in England or by English men in an unfavourable light—and undoubtedly wars between nations have often taken place with far less apparent provocation than most Americans think they have. (!) I don't feel called on to defend England or the English but I do think it unwise for you to expend any of your ~~[illegible]~~ wrath upon any one but the rebels at the present time—or to talk of intending to do so at any future time. Admitting all that can be reasonably admitted against the English people at this time in ~~you [illegible]~~ respect to the U. States, I fear you have a greater number of bitter & truly dangerous enemies ~~[illegible]~~ of the Union within the Northern States than could be found in all our three Kingdoms. (Exactly) I am very much of Goldwin Smith's opinion which at first I thought extravagant—that at this time nothing is at all worth your notice or your efforts but the suppression of the rebellion. (so we say to England [illegible])

Last night while sitting waiting for the beginning of a lecture by a minister on a religious or controversial subject an old man who sat, saying nothing, beside me, turned & said quietly

— "Another Federal defeat — the Confederates
" within 7 miles of Washington." This was
all he said — and he evidently did not
care much one way or other. (?) Indeed of
late bad news is so common & we hear so
much of Federal defeats that I hate to look
at a newspaper or to ~~to~~ hear people talking
about the telegrams. The idea of final Confe-
derate victory fills me with horror as much
as anything political could do ~~[illegible]~~. To
prevent this seems the only thing worth thinking of
and nobody on this side of the Atlantic wishes
your success more surely than I do. As far
as I am able to judge Lincoln has not only the
best chance of the Presidency next term — but he
deserves it better than any one else we know
of. I fear Phillips is carried ~~away~~ away
by temper & passion. Richard in a letter I had
from him yesterday says Fremont is disliked
& despised in California & has no chance there.
However I have felt so anxious for Grant's success
that all merely political movements have been
insignificant in my eyes.

I had a long letter from Cairnes yesterday. He
has been in London — a guest at Peter Taylor's,
M.P. - with whom is Miss Remond. He thinks her intel-
lectually superior to a majority of the white women
he meets — but this is of course not for publication

He has also had a great contest with Lord St Maur, son of the Duke of Somerset who stoutly declared himself in favour of slavery and said that the United States Slave Trade was a myth. However he has evidently met his match in Cairnes who promised to let me see some of the essays that resulted from the controversy. The foolish, thoughtless young aristocrat has evidently got into the hands of some of those lying slaveholders

If you can without much difficulty send or procure for me the information that Dr Hancock requires you will much oblige - Yours ever truly

Richd D Webb.

When I heard of your Edward going to Cairo I feared he might suffer from the swampy nature of the place - but I take it he may now get a chance of some pleasanter & less dangerous locality

MS. B.1.6 v.15 p.111